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No. 5 Hamilton Place, Boston, Massachusetts

Jack's Brother's Sister

A Sketch in One Act

By

PAULINE PHELPS AND MARION SHORT

BOSTON

WALTER H. BAKER & CO.

1916

PS 3531
H57J3
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Jack's Brother's Sister

CHARACTERS

ROB ROWLEY, *Jack's roommate.*

PETUNIA, *Jack's brother's sister.*

PROPERTIES

In addition to articles mentioned on table there should be ready two chocolate cakes of similar size. Writing tablet with message from Jack written on top page. A piece of rope. Two pairs of boxing gloves.



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Jack's Brother's Sister

SCENE.—JACK'S sitting-room in college. Door C. in flat. Doors R. and L. opening into bedrooms. Up L., a window opening on to college campus. Table with spread down R. On table are school books, two long-stemmed pipes and the framed photograph of a girl. Chairs R. and L. of table. Down L. a couch sofa with drapery reaching to the floor. Room decorated with college flags, tennis racquets and other articles indicative of college life and sports.

(Discovered, ROB ROWLEY, with a red skirt on, over his other clothes, a fancy shawl thrown around his shoulders, and on his head a flower-trimmed hat. He carries a large chocolate cake and is rushing about the room excitedly, seeking a hiding-place for it.)

ROB. Now, where the deuce shall I hide this cake? Some of the fellows caught sight of me. They'll be in my room next. (*Hides cake under right side of sofa. Loud knocking heard at door in flat.*) Who's that? Quit that racket and get away from there. (*Goes up to door, and shouts to those on other side of it.*) Stop that pounding, I say. I can't let you in. I'm taking a bath. But if you're looking for the fellow in the red dress, that stole the Seniors' cake, I just now saw him scoting across the campus—— (*Listens at door where pounding has ceased.*) They didn't stop to hear me. (*Unlocks door, opens it, and looks out cautiously.*) Good! They've gone on up the hall! (*Closes door and begins to dance around the room in comical fashion expressive of great glee.*) And we Juniors won't do a thing to that cake at our meeting to-night. Now we're even with the Seniors for the last trick they played on us. (*Picks up writing-pad from table and reads top page.*) Hello! Mr. Roommate's left a note for me. (*Reads.*) "Am off for rowing practice on the lake. Am expecting my younger brother, Ned, from home.

Entertain him until I get back." (*Flings down pad and groans.*) Just like Jack to ask me to entertain a fresh kid when I've got to cram for exams. I'd tell Jack's baby brother to go anywhere, if it weren't that I'm in love with Jack's brother's twin sister. (*Takes up photo of girl from table and looks at it sentimentally.*) Oh, you beauty, you angel! To think of being in love with a girl's picture for two years, and never getting up courage enough to face the original. If she is half as sweet as she looks — (*Hears racket and shouts in hall.*) Still chasing the cake they'll never find. (*Sets photo back on table.*) But if they once caught me in these togs —

(*Picks up skirt and exits into room, L. Distant shouts heard, then PETUNIA'S voice, growing louder as she approaches door.*)

PETUNIA (*outside*). Help! Help! They're after me. Help, somebody! Where's Jack's room? Jack! Jack! (*Enters door in flat, closes it and leans against it pantingly. She has on red dress with fancy coat or cape, and wears a flower-trimmed hat and carries a chocolate cake.*) Oh, the wretches, the fiends! I'll never speak to a college boy again. They chased me as if I'd been a football. And told me to take off that skirt. They must be crazy. It's a pity I can't bring my own dear brother a chocolate cake without being mobbed. Oh, I believe I hear them again. Jack! Jack!

[*Exits, frantically, into room, R.*

ROB (*as he enters from L., red skirt rolled into bundle under his arm*). I thought I'd bluff them off. And if any of them say anything to me about a red skirt (*opening trunk standing near door, C.*) I'll tell them to go drown themselves; and if they dare to accuse me of dressing up in girls' clothes (*flinging red bundle into left side of trunk*) I'll clear out the whole lot of them, one at a time or in a bunch. Didn't get the wrestling championship in this college for nothing. [*Exit, L.*

Enter PETUNIA, R.

PETUNIA. If I could only find Jack. It's a study hour. Where can he be? (*Catches sight of writing pad on table.*) Jack's handwriting! (*Picks up pad and reads inaudibly, then puts pad down with a sigh.*) Oh, what shall I do? I wish Neddie had come instead of me, as he intended. Goodness only knows when Jack will come in, and—oh, I can never

go down all those stairs alone in this red dress. Just the sight of it seemed to give them hydrophobia. If I could only get into some of Jack's old togs and make my escape—— Oh, maybe I can! [*Exit, hastily, into room, R.*]

Enter ROB, L.

ROB. Rob, old boy, you bluffed the Seniors out of their cake and you're *it*, you are certainly *it*. (*Sets PETUNIA's photo to front of table, lights a pipe, and sits down to contemplate the photo as he smokes.*) Always like to have her in front of me to gaze on through the hazy. The girl of my dreams. The little girl they all thought as timid as a shadow, who yet had the nerve to dress in her brother's clothes and win that big race at the county fair—and win my heart when I heard about it. Pretty as a flower and plucky as a—— (*Looks at pipe.*) Needs some more tobacco. [*Exit, L.*]

(*PETUNIA, in man's riding costume, her hair done up under cap, peeps out of door, R., and then enters.*)

PETUNIA. I'm a sight in these things of Jack's, but I feel safer than in that red skirt. Now, if I can only get down to Nell in the carriage—— But I'd better hide my dress first. (*Reaches inside room, R., and brings out her red skirt. She rolls it into a bundle.*) If any visitors came in, it might compromise Jack if left in plain sight. I'll throw it in here. (*Opens trunk and flings it into right side of it.*) And those wretched college boy Indians shall never eat Jack's chocolate cake—I vow they shan't. (*Runs into room, R., and emerges immediately with cake which she hides under sofa, other side of where ROB has hidden his.*) There, now, I'm all ready to go. But I feel dreadfully scared somehow. I—I can't go out there before all those college students showing my—boots. But I must. It's the only way out of it. Well, I'll try to look like a sport if I can. (*Puts cap on one side, swings riding crop and practices a gait. ROB appears in door, R., unperceived by her. He stands staring at her and smokes as he does so.*) Nothing the matter with this stride. I believe I can carry out the bluff all right. If I meet any girls I'll make a hit with them. I'm braced for the start at last.

(*Goes toward door, C.*)

ROB. Hello, you, hold on!

(PETUNIA comes to a sudden halt, almost falling over with the shock at hearing him.)

PETUNIA. It's Jack's roommate. I shall die. (*Direct, facing ROB.*) Hello yourself. I'm in a hurry.

(*Starts for door again.*)

ROB. None of that. Come and plant yourself. I've been looking for you and I'm glad to see you, but I'm busy, very busy. Sit down and watch me study.

(*Sits at table and opens a book, indicating other chair for PETUNIA to sit in.*)

PETUNIA (*in faint voice*). But I can't stay, you know. There's nothing to stay for.

ROB. Nonsense. I've been expecting you. I'd have known you anywhere, Freshie.

PETUNIA (*piteously*). I suppose I do look fresh, but I'm feeling quite wilted, thank you. (*Aside.*) Who does he think I am?

ROB. Family resemblance, Neddie. Jack's nose and eyes. How's your twin sister?

PETUNIA (*aside*). Oh, I see. I'm my brother's sister's twin brother. (*Direct.*) My sister is threatened with nervous prostration.

ROB. I'm sorry to hear that. Something's tried her nerves?

PETUNIA. Yes, she's been chased by a lot of wild Indians—animals, I mean. But she's better now—(*looking back affrightedly at door*) while it lasts. Do they ever break in here?

ROB (*meditatively*). I'm awfully sorry to hear that about your sister —

PETUNIA. I'll tell her so. Good-morning. I won't wait for Jack. (*Rises.*)

ROB. Don't go yet. Sit down. He expected you to stay until night. (*Aside.*) Odd he should be in such a hurry. (*Direct.*) Say, you don't seem to know me. I'm Rob Rowley, Jack's roommate. Don't you remember when you went camping with us two years ago, and the fun we had, eh?

(*Slaps PETUNIA on back.*)

PETUNIA. Yes, yes, I remember. (*Aside.*) He nearly jarred my hair down. (*Pulls cap tighter.*) Oh, if he should ever guess I'm my sister I should just go up in smoke! Here's

for a bluff. (*Direct.*) By Jove, didn't we have a rummy old time camping, though? Swimming and smoking and drinking gin fizzes and things with whiskey in 'em, and sitting up as late as eleven o'clock, and kissing the girls, old sport, yes, kissing them, by thunder! (*Slaps ROB on back with tremendous force and walks off in bravado fashion. Aside.*) Fancy I carried that off rather well. (*Loses confidence.*) But maybe I didn't. I—I'm afraid I didn't, and if he suspects—— (*Nervously, direct.*) You really must excuse me now. I've got to meet a man on the corner.

ROB (*starting up, sternly*). Sit down, that's too thin!

PETUNIA. Who? Me?

ROB (*severely*). Sit down, I say. (*PETUNIA sits timorously. ROB, aside.*) I'll bet he's onto my stealing that cake and wants to get out to blab to the Seniors about it. Jack's a Senior, and——

PETUNIA (*with sudden bravery starting for door*). Say, you can't boss me around. This isn't any kindergarten. I'm going.

ROB. But you're not, little Freshie. (*Locks door, c.*)

PETUNIA (*aside, frightened*). Locked in with a man! (*Recovers her courage.*) But after all there's nothing wrong about it when you're a man yourself.

ROB (*suspiciously, as he grabs her hand and leads her down stage*). Now, look here. There's something about you that isn't right.

PETUNIA (*aside, almost tearfully, inspecting her trousers*). I must have got 'em on wrong side to!

ROB. And you're not going out of this room until Jack comes if we have to stay here all night long.

PETUNIA (*aside, very much frightened*). Isn't he fierce? I'll have to jump out of the window, and I'll be certain to land on the wrong end.

ROB (*suspiciously*). By the way, you didn't see anything of a girl around this dormitory to-day, did you?

PETUNIA (*gaspingly*). With a red dress?

ROB (*aside*). I knew it. The Seniors have set him to watch me. I'm on to them. (*Direct, in bulldozing manner.*) Yes, with a red dress. But she didn't come in here! Do you understand? She never came near this room.

PETUNIA (*meekly*). Didn't she? Well, I—I'm glad she didn't.

ROB (*handing her a long pipe from table*). Here, make

yourself comfortable. You are my prisoner, so be resigned. I've got some work to do. Smoke up and be happy. (*Aside.*) While he's occupied I must get rid of that red skirt.

(*Goes up stage to trunk.*)

PETUNIA (*examining long pipe critically*). What do you do? Play on it? (*Runs fingers up and down pipe stem as if playing flute. ROB pulls trunk toward room, L. PETUNIA, hearing him, puts down pipe and starts up excitedly.*) Stop! stop! What are you doing? That's Jack's trunk, isn't it?

ROB. It's Jack's and mine together, but it's in the way here and I'll take it into another room.

PETUNIA. Yes, Jack's room. Over here.

ROB. No, my room. Over there.

(*They pull opposite ways, holding handles of trunk.*)

PETUNIA. You said half of it was Jack's. (*Aside, horror stricken.*) My clothes are in there—and garters. He mustn't look!

ROB. Well, the biggest half is mine. (*Aside.*) That confounded red skirt! If I could only get that out.

PETUNIA (*as they still tug at trunk*). I'm here to defend Jack's property. His half shan't go.

ROB. Nor my half either. (*Aside.*) The kid's on to me—sure as fate. He suspects what's in this trunk. I'd like to give him a solar plexus.

PETUNIA (*aside*). If I can't manage to keep him out of this trunk I don't suppose I could ever manage a husband, and I always said I would.

(*They sit on trunk determinedly, backs to each other.*)

ROB (*after pause*). Err?

PETUNIA. Um?

ROB. Did you speak?

PETUNIA. Did you say anything?

ROB. No, I didn't say anything.

PETUNIA. How funny! I didn't either.

(*They turn their backs again. Pause.*)

PETUNIA }
ROB } (*speaking simultaneously*). Yes, 'tis nice weather.

(*Pause.*)

ROB (*aside*). I'll soak him in a minute.

PETUNIA (*aside*). If I could only find a pin in these clothes, I'd jab him.

ROB. Look here, you little lobster, do you know anything about boxing—the manly sports, eh?

PETUNIA (*with great bravado*). Manly sports? I should say so. I can play croquet, and I've played hookey. There!

ROB. Don't get funny, kid. Boxing, I mean.

PETUNIA. Fighting blood in the family. See that muscle. (*Extends arm; aside.*) He's trying to frighten me. (*Direct.*) Why, I've boxed ever since I stopped wearing dresses, and I'm a wonder!

ROB. Good! We'll have a bout. You get Jack's gloves in there, and I'll get mine! (*Starts for room, L.*)

PETUNIA (*aside*). That gives me a chance for my clothes!

ROB (*aside*). I'll sneak that skirt!

(*Both exit, looking back at each other suspiciously. PETUNIA returns immediately, and pulls ROB's red skirt from trunk.*)

PETUNIA. There, I've got the better of him!

(*Runs into room, R., with skirt.*)

Enter ROB, door L.

ROB. Now for that skirt! Here it is!

(*Grabs PETUNIA'S red skirt from trunk and exits, L.*)

PETUNIA (*entering R., with ROB's skirt*). How aggravating! This isn't mine! Jack must have been to a masquerade, or something or other!

ROB (*entering with PETUNIA'S skirt, and not perceiving PETUNIA*). I could swear this isn't the skirt I had on! What the deuce——

(*They suddenly perceive each other, wave red skirts, shriek, and vanish into rooms R. and L. ROB peers out again, gloves in one hand; rushes to the trunk and throws PETUNIA'S skirt into it, sitting on trunk as she enters.*)

PETUNIA (*entering from R., with boxing gloves*). Here are the gloves!

ROB (*putting on his gloves*). Hope you're strong in the wind!

PETUNIA (*frightened*). Why, you wouldn't knock the breath out of me, would you?

ROB. That's my specialty!

PETUNIA. Well, I think a lot of my breath, and I don't want to lose it! (*With braggadocio.*) Anyhow, you'll get hurt if you box with me! One slap, and you'd fall right over!

ROB. Come on! (*Contemptuously.*) Why, you've got those gloves on thumbs outside!

PETUNIA (*indignantly*). Well, maybe my thumbs grow that way! (*Puts gloves on correctly.*)

ROB (*sparring by himself*). First to limber up!

PETUNIA. Yes, first to limber up! (*Aside.*) I don't know how to box, but I'll have to pretend!

(*Watches ROB in his comic sprinting about. He acts as if pommeling somebody's head under his arm, etc. Whatever ROB does PETUNIA immediately imitates. Keep up as long as business goes.*)

ROB. Now, then, look out for your wind! (*Takes position.*

PETUNIA *gives him a comical slap in the face before he is prepared.*) Good! (*Strikes out at her. She turns her back and runs, ROB after her.*) Where are you going? This isn't a foot race!

PETUNIA. Yes, it is! (*Continues running.*)

ROB (*indignantly, still pursuing her*). Why, you're a regular sissie!

PETUNIA. Well, sissies are just as good as bubbies.

(*Jumps over chair.*)

ROB. Come on. (*Corners her.*)

PETUNIA (*almost crying*). I can't fight. I won't! I—I've hurt my finger!

ROB. How?

PETUNIA (*crossly*). Stepped on it. How do you suppose?

ROB (*contemptuously*). Baby! You ought to be in petticoats!

PETUNIA (*tremulously*). I—I wish I were!

ROB. I've a good mind to thrash you, and make a man of you!

PETUNIA (*tearfully*). That wouldn't do it. (*ROB makes a pass at her; she throws gloves at him.*) Keep away from me, I say.

ROB (*with tolerant contempt*). Oh, of course, if you've got a sore finger, that settles it. (*Takes off his own gloves.*) Sit down! (*PETUNIA sits by table.*) Say, kid, on the Q. T., is your sister as pretty as that picture there?

PETUNIA (*taking up picture*). My sister is the living image of me—(*aside*) all but the pants!

ROB. I've dreamed of her for two long years. What do you suppose she'd think if she knew it, eh?

PETUNIA. Dreamed of her for two years, and never showed up? Well, she'd think you were slow, I can tell you that!

ROB (*despairingly*). I knew it! My confounded bashfulness! I send her messages in Jack's letters sometimes, hot stuff. But when it comes to meeting a girl face to face, especially a vision like her —

PETUNIA (*aside*). Isn't he sweet when he talks like that? (*Direct.*) Oh, brace up! She's nothing to be afraid of!

ROB. But suppose I should ever meet her! Now, what the dickens could I say?

PETUNIA. That's easy. Begin like this. (*Dramatically.*) "Oh, Miss Gay, Petunia, Pet! I know I've only been in love with you for the brief space of twice three hundred and sixty-five days, but the strength of my attachment —" (*Holds out hand to ROB.*) Here you squeeze her hand.

ROB (*taking PETUNIA'S hand gingerly*). Wouldn't that be rather sudden?

PETUNIA. A girl likes a sudden man.

ROB. Does she? This kind? (*Squeezes her hand with both of his until she draws up foot, and makes a grimace of pain.*) How's that?

PETUNIA (*shaking hand as if it hurt her intensely*). I don't know until I see a doctor. Now, put one arm around her, gently—like this. (*Pulls his arm around her.*)

ROB. Say, she'd scratch my eyes out!

PETUNIA. Would she? Both arms, please!

(*Draws his other arm around her, and leans back against him blissfully.*)

ROB (*holding position*). She'd call for help! At least I think she would, but if she didn't I'd give her such a squeeze —

(*In his excitement squeezes PETUNIA violently.*)

PETUNIA. Oh, you've flattened me right out! What do

you take me for? (*Staggers away from him.*) Wow, I'm mashed to jelly!

ROB (*disgustedly*). Well, of all the molly-coddle muffs you are the limit! Why, I'll bet even your sister has more sand than you have. Jack told me about her dressing up in boys' clothes once and winning the race at a county fair.

PETUNIA (*indignantly*). Jack blabbed about that, did he? Well, of all the — (*Stops abruptly.*) Oh, did you think it unladylike in Petunia? Awfully unladylike? But, you see, it seemed as if she just had to do it. Things had gone wrong with dad that year—he put his money in stocks, you know, and stocks went down. Isn't it queer the way stocks have of going down just after you have put your money in them? Why, it almost ruined dad. There were notes coming due it seemed he couldn't meet; and so he staked every cent he could raise on the black filly to redeem himself. Oh, she was a fleet one, that filly! But cranky! Jockey Joe and I—I mean Jockey Joe and my sister, were the only ones she'd take a stride for. And then, just at the last moment, the very morning of the race, Jockey Joe fell sick. Petunia was a coward, as big a coward as all women are, but for dad's sake she determined to put on jockey's clothes and ride that filly. She'd have gone through fire and water for dad.

ROB. When Jack told me of it, I thought it was the bravest, pluckiest thing a girl ever did.

PETUNIA (*relieved*). Oh, I'm so glad you feel that way about it. I—I thought you might blame her, you know. (*With enthusiasm.*) But it was a great race! Here were the horses all lined up for the start. To the left Bill Dorkins on White Lightning —

ROB. I know him. A cheat driver, as mean as they make them.

PETUNIA. Yes, and his horse a winner in half the county races last year. To the right, Hal Smith on Buffo, the favorite until White Lightning was entered. Here me, on the black filly Neverdie, in her maiden race.

ROB. You mean your twin sister on Neverdie.

PETUNIA. But every one thought it was I. We look so much alike, you see. Oh, can't you imagine the grandstand jammed, the band playing, everybody cheering for their favorites?

ROB (*ringing bell on table*). They're off!

PETUNIA. White Lightning in the lead, Buffo a close sec-

ond, the black filly back in the bunch. Shouts from the crowd, "Go it, Lightning; you'll win the race." "Keep it up, Buffo." Dad in the grandstand, white as a ghost, with his eyes on Neverdie. Lightning down to his long, flat racing stride, Buffo at his neck; four good lengths of daylight showing between them and the field. No chance for the rest.

ROB. Yes, yes, but how about Neverdie?

PETUNIA. Lost in the bunch, but going steady as a pendulum! (*Jumps aside trunk.*) That's right, Neverdie, slow, slow. It's a long race and the last lap tells. Save your wind. Hear the shouting. "Ha, there, Lightning!" "On there, Buffo!" "Only two in the race!" Let yourself out a little, Neverdie, but steady, steady. They think you're too far behind to catch up now, but the race is only half over and you're just getting down to work. On, on, for dad's sake, Neverdie. Trees slipping by like green ribbons, dust blinding me, those two horses still ahead, but we're creeping up on them inch by inch. On, girl, on. We're abreast of Buffo, we've passed him; Lightning only half a length ahead and slacking speed. Do your best, little filly; it's the race of our lives. Don't fail me, don't fail me now, or you'll break my heart. We're up to Lightning's side, his shoulder, gaining, gaining! Now it's neck and neck! Oh, if that wire weren't quite so near! On, I tell you, Neverdie! Think of dad! Only half a second more. On, on, we're under the wire! We've won! Whoop! (*Jumps from trunk, waving her hand above her head.* ROB joins her in shouting with joy. PETUNIA staggers toward a chair, exhausted.) Water, water for the jockey, and a piece of chocolate cake!

ROB (*collaring her*). Chocolate cake, chocolate cake, is it? Aha! Say, young fellow, you've given yourself away at last. Do you know where it is?

PETUNIA (*stammeringly*). The ch-chocolate cake?

ROB (*sarcastically*). Oh, fudge, yes. The ch-chocolate cake.

PETUNIA (*meekly*). It's hid under the sofa.

ROB (*aside*). Now, how the deuce did he find that out? (*Direct.*) Well, I see you are on to me. But I'll never let you out of here to blab about it to the Seniors. Make up your mind to that.

PETUNIA (*aside*). How he glares! And what is he talking about? I believe he's gone crazy all of a sudden.

ROB (*meaningly*). And of course you won't let me out with the cake?

PETUNIA (*aside*). I suppose I'd better agree with him. (*Direct, imitating his tone.*) No, no, I won't let you out with the cake.

ROB. So we might as well eat it!

PETUNIA (*aside*). Brother's cake! I hope it chokes him. But I'll have to give in to a lunatic.

(*They both cross to sofa and sit down. After they look at each other curiously, each reaches down between his feet and gets a cake from under the sofa. Then they start to opposite sides of room, looking at each other in amazement, each beholding the other with a cake.*)

ROB. Well, you certainly take the cake!

ROB } (*each holding cake in one hand and pointing with*
PETUNIA } *the other*). Where did you get that?

ROB (*first to recover himself*). So you've been stealing, too?

PETUNIA. I didn't steal two! I didn't even steal one. Mother baked it! (*Whistle sounds outside.*)

ROB. The Juniors' signal! (*Goes to L., and is seen looking out of the window. Calls down.*) Yes, I sneaked the Seniors' cake, all right. I have it here.

PETUNIA (*aside*). Then that is the Seniors' cake, and he stole it! Now I know why they chased me. But my brother Jack's a Senior, and I've got to stand up for Jack.

ROB (*shouting down again*). Yes, I'll lower it to you as soon as I get a rope. [*Exit into room, L.*]

PETUNIA (*solus*). The Juniors shan't have it! They shan't have either of them! (*Hides both cakes under the table.*) But what will he do if he can't find them? Oh, I'm afraid!

(*Jumps into trunk and lets lid down, with only a crack where she can peep.*)

ROB (*entering from L., with rope, and looking about bewildered*). Why, where is it? Where's he? What's up, anyhow? (*Looks into room, R., and all around, suspiciously, then addresses blank space on wall.*) You needn't try to hide yourself. I can see you as plain as daylight, and the cake, too! (*Opens door in flat.*) Here, you two-spot, come back here, or I'll break your neck! [*Exit, hastily, outside door.*]

(*PETUNIA peers from trunk, then jumps out and reaching into it, hastily pulls out her clothes.*)

PETUNIA. I'll get into these skirts again, or die in the attempt!

[Exit, R.]

ROB (*entering door in flat*). What a fool I am! He's hiding in that trunk, of course! (*Approaches trunk cautiously, and lifts lid suddenly.*) No, by Jove! Well, I'll find him and stop his blab if I have to chase this whole building over! And he's run off with the cakes, too! I didn't think he had it in him! Nervy little cuss, and looked like a hairpin! (*Goes to window, and shouts down.*) Hey! Keep a look-out at the gates for a dinkey little chap with a couple of cakes! He's swiped ours and another one! Grab him and put him in a hat box, and bring him back to my room. (*Returns to c., and picks up PETUNIA's photo from table.*) He's your brother, but I'm going to lick him! No, worse than that; sure as I catch him I'll turn him over my knee, and paddle him with a slipper. That'll take the starch out of him! (*Sentimentally, to picture.*) You'll forgive me, won't you, Petunia? You know I'd never serve you like that! (*Returns photo to table.*) I wonder if they've caught him? [Exit, outside door.]

Enter PETUNIA from R. She has on red skirt and big hat, and is struggling into her coat.

PETUNIA (*with determination*). Before I go I'll throw those cakes out of the window, if there are no Juniors prowling around. I've turned against chocolate forever! (*Takes cakes to window, and looks out.*) Not a Junior in sight. Only a couple of children. (*Throws cake, and calls down.*) Yes, little girl, yes, it's for you, dear. (*Throws second cake.*) And here's another! Give little brother some! (*Returns to room.*) Now to make my escape before —

(*Starts toward outside door, and meets ROB coming in.*)

ROB (*politely, not recognizing her*). I beg your pardon —

PETUNIA. I made a mistake in the cake. I mean door! Excuse yourself—good-morning!

ROB (*getting between her and the door*). By thunder, it's you!

PETUNIA (*very much agitated*). No, it isn't; indeed, it isn't. You're entirely mistaken!

ROB (*sternly*). You, dressed up in girls' clothes! But that disguise won't work! Take them off right where you stand!

PETUNIA. I—I can't —

ROB (*emphatically*). If you don't take them off, I will. I've made up my mind to spank you with a slipper, and ——

PETUNIA (*shrieking, and getting behind chair*). Don't you touch me! Don't you dare! I'm not what you think, I'm a woman—Jack's brother's sister!

ROB (*staggering back*). Petunia, the girl I love?

PETUNIA. Yes, Petunia, the girl who loves you! I mean—I don't know what I mean ——

ROB (*with quick scorn*). It's just another trick! I don't believe you're a girl at all! (*Suddenly and peremptorily.*) Rats!

PETUNIA (*shrieking, drawing skirts about her, revealing riding boots still on, and jumping on table*). Rats? Where—where—oh, save me! How many did you see?

ROB (*aside*). She's a woman, sure enough! And she said she loved me! (*Sentimentally.*) Petunia!

PETUNIA. Yes, Jack's brother's sister!

ROB (*rapturously*). Jack's brother's sister, you are mine!

(*Jumps on to table beside her, and takes her in his arms.*)

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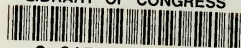
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